From: johnh@mail.truesdail.com@lanset.com@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/17/01 1:11pm
Subject: MS-Only EPA Web Sites

I work at an environmental testing laboratory. I would like to move away from
the Windows operating system to Linux as a company-wide standard. But we have
to submit UCMR data to the EPA via http://epa.lmi.org. This web site ONLY works
with Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0 or 5.5. It cannot be made to function
effectively with any other browser. It is unlikely that Microsoft will port
Internet Explorer to Linux, or any other platform at this point. Therefore,
I do not have a real choice of operating systems. If this were an isolated
example, I would not be writing this. But it is not. There are similar situations
at GSA, and probably elsewhere.

This restriction apparently arose because the lmi.org website was built with
Microsoft tools, and these tools are designed to render other browsers unusable.

My real concern is the new .NET strategy which Microsoft is pushing so hard.
If a significant number of new services are created in a framework that also
forces anyone wishing to use them to do so from a Microsoft platform, then Microsoft
will be in a position to take the whole World Wide Web private.

The Web was >created< by Tim Berners-Lee at CERN, and given away. Microsoft
likes to use the word 'innovation' from time to time, often in the context of
Open Source projects, as in 'Open Source projects are not a true source of innovation'.
I do not think that anything Microsoft has ever created (including Excel and
Powerpoint, for which credit is due) comes anywhere near the creation of the
Web in terms of innovation. Consider how long the Internet existed prior to
the creation of the Web, compare the rate of growth and reach during the pre-Web
and post-Web periods, and see if you don't agree. Most people today are unable
to distinguish between the Internet and the Web.

So, why should Microsoft be permitted to use its monopoly (which never seemed
to be questioned during the trial) to take the Web private?

Free Domain Name Registration with Web Hosting at Lanset Communications.
56k Dialup, Web Design, and Colocation at http://www.lanset.net